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Review of *A Field Guide to American Windmills* By T. Lindsay Baker

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A Field Guide to American Windmills.. By T. Lindsay Baker. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985. Foreward, preface, illustrations, appendices, notes, bibliography, index. xii + 516 pp. \$65.00.

For almost a century, prior to the arrival of rural electrification in the 1930s and 1940s, American windmills erected over a dug or a drilled well provided the primary source of water on farms and ranches and in isolated communities. The stately windmill was an ever-present part of the rural landscape; some small towns were almost a forest of windmills. Much smaller than the European windmill from which it was modeled, the American windmill became a commercial success after 1854 when Daniel Halladay invented a successful self-governing mill. Windmill development helped to provide the technology for

successful settlement of the Great Plains. Although most windmill manufacturers were located east of the Mississippi, a surprising number of them were established within Great Plains states. By the end of the nineteenth century, steel was replacing wood, and the typical windmill still seen in the 1980s came into existence.

T. Lindsay Baker, curator of science and technology, Panhandle-Plains Museum, Canyon, Texas, researched the American windmill for fifteen years. This comprehensive volume contains a history of windmill developments in the United States and almost four hundred illustrations, including 112 India-ink drawings of the most popular designs. An 82 page appendix lists more than 1,400 "Known Windmill Manufacturers and Firms Claiming to Be Windmill Manufacturers" with locations, dates of operation, and windmill model names. The 44 page bibliography is divided into archival materials, interviews, books, articles, trade literature, advertisements, business directories, farm implement and industrial directories, and U.S. government publications. The note section and the index are comprehensive.

This guide, useful for identifying windmills but somewhat cumbersome for carrying in the field because it weighs more than four pounds, is the most complete general history of the American turbine-wheel windmill. Attractively published, *A Field Guide to American Windmills* will find a positive response from users of all kinds—those who want to know much about all kinds of windmills or those who want a small amount of specific information.

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